

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

December 6, 2002

Members Present: Sara Woolf, Elsie Fetterman, Doris Holden, Barbara Melrose

Absent: Janice Denton, Jean Haggerty, Henry Peirce, Isaac BenEzra, Doris Mundo

Staff Present: John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano,

Other: Doris Holden, Treasurer of the Senior Trust

Minutes of October 31st Meeting accepted with two corrections (Henry Peirce by phone.) Add Doris Holden to the list of attendees, and eliminate last sentence under grant committee.

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report Doris reported that except for a small increase in investments, everything is the same. John would like to do an April solicitation in the *Senior Spirit*. Nancy requested \$75 reimbursement to the Senior Center Club for scholarships given out. VOTED (Henry Peirce also votes for this by phone.)

Staff Reports

John The budget picture is not great. Romney said it is the "worst fiscal situation since 1938." The Town Manager says that it is a grim picture especially for the schools. John doesn't think there can be any increases. The budget process is slow. It looks like there will not be any need to worry about staffing changes. John is concerned in general for Seniors and what they will receive through the state. John is chairing the M.C.O.A.'s Legislation Committee.

Elsie asked if there has been any discussion about Medicaid dollars following people who are able to leave nursing homes to help with home care? John was asked to let the COA know if he hears anything so there can be supportive political action.

Barbara Melrose asked John about what the budget timelines are. John said there are two dates--mid-January (Town Manager's budget) and late-April (Town Meeting)

Nancy The December/January *Senior Spirit* was printed and collated by Kinkos for the first time. The \$800 cost is going to be a huge savings as the previous printer, Sunraise, was charging \$1375! This will help restore the Senior Center Club's depleted funds.

This year's Thanksgiving Day dinner served about 50 at the Bangs and 18 home deliveries. There were very generous donations from Chick Delano, Judies, Atkins, Always in Bloom, Nancy Jane's and the Masonic Temple. Elsie commended Nancy for organizing the dinner.

Committee Reports

Wellness (Sara reporting) Sara handed out the Statement of Purpose. There is a consensus that any fitness center planned for the future would be state-of-the-art. The committee eventually will want to meet with Doris regarding funding. An upcoming project is to advertise all wellness programs in a brochure and get Cheryl to help. Nancy spoke about the small number of health questionnaires returned—she thinks this might be due to people not wanting to sign the release statement on the back. Although

a person could technically still sue if there was just cause, the statement itself might be a deterrent.

Sara, John and Cheryl met Wednesday to discuss the Nursing Center and the concerns of the Senior Health Advisory Committee. Sara said the issues were “largely misunderstandings” and she is “optimistic that any problems can be resolved.” Sara said it was a mistake for Shirley to have handed out the minutes of the Sr. Health Advisory Committee without permission of the Committee and without Cheryl being aware in advance of its contents. She feels this issue needs to be addressed within the Advisory Committee and was an “injustice” to Cheryl. Sara said the meeting times problems were misunderstandings.

Transportation (Liz reporting) The Transportation Committee met 12/3. Frank Wells, who is the C.O.A.’s representative to the Public Transportation Committee, reported that the P.T.C. has been discussing the Segway Scooter and whether it should be banned in the downtown. He said the C.O.A. might want to have input into this discussion.

The Transportation Committee is focusing on looking at what unmet needs there are in transportation and believes that there are gaps to examine. Ren Srey from the Health Department will come to the next meeting to discuss transportation issues of the Cambodian community. The Committee has also invited John to attend its next meeting on January 21st at 10 AM to help clarify how decisions are made when there are deficits and services have to be cut.

Grants (Elsie) Nothing new at this time.

Facilities (John) John handed out a summary of his discussion with Henry Peirce.

Maybe the grants and facilities committee should be combined. Barbara Melrose asked if someone is watching for grants coming out on the internet on the N.C.O.A. or other government sites. Of Senior Center staff, only John receives information on this. It was suggested that Nancy receive it also.

Barbara Melrose asked about why nothing has happened as far as redecorating the Large Activity Room. John said that he has been holding Nancy back from working on this because there are storage issues that have to be worked out first.

H.V.E.S. (Elsie) The last meeting on Monday was devoted to Al Norman’s presentation—Elsie felt this talk was very worthwhile and Sara felt a summary should be printed in the next *Senior Spirit*—John will ask Al Norman to give us an article.

Elsie reports that only 120 of the 450 slots available to elders have been used so far in the state program to make \$1512 available per person for homecare when Medicaid eligible people return home from a nursing home. Highland Valley has used 33 slots or one quarter of what’s been used statewide in its pilot program. Sara commented that this really isn’t a lot of money in reality considering the costs of homecare.

Elsie asked John about his meetings with the Parking Commission and whether there will be any discount or free parking for elders. John said the Commission will meet in the next couple of weeks to discuss this. Liz thinks close parking should be provided for free or at a more reasonable cost for those who are frail.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM. The next meeting will be January 9th.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Hirsh Pagano